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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 6054
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3748
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3607
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4296
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 4233
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1355
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001669

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; OES (MICHAEL SCHENA)
ASTANA FOR BRUCE HUDSPETH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2019

TAGS: [EAID](#) [OSCI](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UN](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: DESERT INSTITUTE OPEN TO SCIENTIFIC
COLLABORATION

REF: A. STATE 71325

[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 1581

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Poloff on December 29 met with the director of the Turkmenistan National Institute of Deserts, Flora, and Fauna, one of his deputies, and a deputy minister of the Turkmenistan Ministry of Nature Protection to discuss possible future joint projects that might fulfill the goals of President Obama's Cairo initiative (ref A). Dr. Paltamet Esenov, the Desert Institute director, said that his Institute had many ideas for new projects, but lacked funding. His Institute has, in the past, worked with a variety of international organizations to implement projects, including the Embassy, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the University of Nevada at Reno. Institute officials showed Poloff some of their most important publications, including country studies on biodiversity and environmental protection and the Red Book of endangered flora and fauna, which are published with UNDP and IMF support.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Dr. Esenov mentioned that one project he would like to resume, if the Institute had sufficient funding, would be the publication in English of their journal, "Problems of Desert Development." This journal has been published since 1967 in Russian, and until about 10 years ago, was translated into English and published by a company in New York City. Esenov added that until 2000 they published six issues of the journal a year, but since then have only had the funding to publish four. He noted that the Desert Institute had submitted grant proposals for the translation and distribution of the journal in English, but so far had no luck receiving a grant. Esenov mentioned that another possibility for distribution would be to put the English language version on the Academy of Sciences or the Ministry of Nature Protection website. He implied that they would

need some computer assistance to accomplish that.

¶3. (SBU) The Desert Institute falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Nature Protection and has a very broad mandate. It is responsible for not only research about desert environments, but also for the protection of endangered plants and animals and for nature preserves. The Desert Institute is currently contributing to a Ministry of Nature Protection initiative to create a national park system (ref B). The German Technical Cooperation organization (GTZ) is helping the Institute with a review of national park legislation from other countries, among other things.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Dr. Esenov and his deputy said they had a lot of additional ideas about areas for cooperation, without elaborating, and were clearly very involved in the Institute's work. Post will continue to engage with these officials to uncover these additional ideas. The deputy minister from the Ministry of Nature Protection, on the other hand, said very little, except to note that he supported the Desert Institute's ideas and work. The Desert Institute appears to be an ideal partner for any future projects in the realm of environmental science, especially since it already has experience working with the U.S. Government and U.S. universities. The Ministry of Nature Protection could probably be more difficult to work with directly, in part because a new minister with little background in nature protection was appointed in October. The previous minister, was an expert in the field and very well disposed towards the United States. END COMMENT.
CURRAN